United Nations

Press Release

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General's Personal Envoy meets with members of Yugoslav Government in Belgrade; holds meetings in two European capitals on the situation in Yugoslavia.

- Security Council endorses Secretary-General's intentions to resume discussions with two parties in Cyprus, as well as Greece and Turkey.

- Secretary-General welcomes awarding of Nobel Peace Prize to Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar.

- For year 2000, World Health Organization projects cumulative total of 30-40 million HIV infections in men, women and children, 90 per cent in developing countries.

- United Nations publishes report on child mortality in developing countries.

- International Journalists' Round Table at Headquarters discusses challenges to human rights at the close of the twentieth century.

- Expert meeting on implementation of United Nations norms in crime prevention and criminal justice begins in Vienna.

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The Secretary-General's Personal Envoy on Yugoslavia, Cyrus Vance, met over the weekend in Belgrade with the Yugoslav Foreign Minister, Budimir Loncar.

The newly appointed Personal Envoy left New York on Friday to travel to Yugoslavia to gather information for a report to the Security Council on the situation in that country. The Council had asked the Secretary-General to consult with the Yugoslav Government and the European Economic Community (EEC) and submit a report to the Council.

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While in Belgrade, Mr. Vance also met with the Prime Minister of Yugoslavia and other senior Government officials, before leaving for The Hague. This morning, as an observer, Mr. Vance attended the fifth plenary minister meeting of The Hague Conference, which was also attended by Lord Carrington, mediator of the European Community for Yugoslavia, as well as by the Foreign Minister of the Netherlands and ministers representing all parties in Yugoslavia. Mr. Vance was scheduled to meet in Bonn this evening with German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the current Chairman of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).

Mr. Vance was expected to continue his mission in Yugoslavia this week.

In a separate development, the Secretary-General told correspondents this morning that negotiations on the release of hostages in Lebanon were continuing. In reply to questions as he entered the building, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar said he was in daily contact with his Personal Delegate, Giandomenico Picco, who is currently in Lebanon, and that he was hopeful for the release of another hostage.

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The Security Council has endorsed the Secretary-General's intentions to resume discussions on Cyprus in early November in order to complete an outline for an overall agreement. The Secretary-General had proposed the convening of a high-level meeting with the participation of the two parties in Cyprus, as well as the Governments of Greece and Turkey.

Under a unanimous resolution on Friday, the 15 Council members had welcomed the proposal to convene such a high-level meeting chaired by the Secretary-General, saying that it represented an effective measure for concluding an overall framework agreement on Cyprus.

The leaders of the two communities in Cyprus, as well as the representatives of Greece and Turkey, were requested by the Council to cooperate fully with the Secretary-General and his representatives so that the high-level international meeting could be convened before the end of the year.

The Council also asked the Secretary-General to report to it in November as to whether sufficient progress had been made to convene the meeting, and, should conditions not be ripe, to convey his assessment of the situation.

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The Secretary-General today welcomed the awarding of the Nobel Prize for Peace to Aung San Suu Kyi of Myanmar, saying that she was "a remarkable leader" who had shown great courage and "a deep attachment to non-violence and democracy".

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He further expressed hope that the recognition of her contribution by the international community would, among other things, lead to her earliest release from house arrest and enable her family to visit her without hinderance.

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The General Assembly's Second Committee (Economic and Financial) today heard a statement by a representative of the World Health Organization (WHO), Ingar Bruggemann, who cited WHO projections that a total of 30 to 40 million people would be infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) by the year 2000, with 90 per cent of all cases in the developing countries.

"The economic and social impact of this disease, which kills people in their most productive years, will be devastating", she said, adding that the impact on young and middle-aged adults, who comprise the educated and trained elite in most countries, could lead to economic, social and even political devastation.

Mrs. Bruggemann spoke as the Committee began its discussion of the report of the Economic and Social Council on its second regular session of 1991.

The Committee was also addressed by Under-Secretary-General for International Economic and Social Affairs, Rafeeuddin Ahmed, who said that since the holding of the Council's high-level meeting in July on the impact of changes in East-West relations on the world economy, forecasts had indicated that the decline in economic activity in Eastern Europe was even more severe than originally anticipated. Those economies would need a great deal of technical and financial assistance, he said, but it should not be at the expense of the developing countries.

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Since the 1950s, developing countries have shown a general decline in childhood mortality. However, according to a recently published United Nations report, disparities in the levels of childhood mortality persist, not only among countries but also among social and economic groups within countries.

The report, "Child Mortality in Developing Countries", is based on a study carried out by the United Nations Population Division and covers countries from various less developed regions including Africa, Latin America, Honduras and urban Paraguay and Asia.

Results of the study underscore the critical role of maternal education in determining the mortality risks of children. Paternal education also plays an increasingly large role in determining child survival, though less salient than that of maternal education. The report also showed that children of illiterate mothers were especially at risk.

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Challenges to human rights at the close of the twentieth century are the focus of an International Journalists' Round Table which opened today at United Nations Headquarters.

Sixteen journalists from 13 countries have been invited to discuss such issues as freedom of the press, human rights and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), as well as social justice and economic disparities. The aim of the Round Table is to strenghten the journalists' information base on United Nations activities in the field of human rights.

The meeting is sponsored by the United Nations Communications and Project Management Division (CPMD).

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A meeting of 35 experts to review and assess the progress achieved in standard-setting and implementation of crime prevention techniques and ways to improve implementation at the national level, began today in Vienna.

Convened by the Secretary-General in response to a resolution adopted by the 1990 Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in Havana, the meeting will also examine arrangements for the effective monitoring of implementation of United Nations norms and guidelines in the field of criminal justice.

The meeting is financed by the Home Office of the United Kingdom, and is being organized by that office, in cooperation with the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the United Nations Office at Vienna.

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